

REMARKS

Claims 8, 9 and 11-14 remain pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claims 8, 9 and 11-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Dibia (WO 96/34580). The Examiner asserts, inter alia, that the cited reference discloses advancing the catheter and stent through the vasculature such that no portion of the stent extends distally beyond the opening in the main vessel and refers to Fig. 7. Applicants respectfully traverse. Fig. 7 clearly shows the stent as having been advanced distally well beyond the opening in the main vessel. It must initially be noted that the element 110 referred to by the Examiner as a "stent" in fact merely comprises one section of the stent 100. As is described in the specification at page 3, lines 21-22, the endoprosthesis 100 comprises three tubular sections (110, 120, 140) which are interlinked by connectors (130 and 150). As such, the distal end of the stent, i.e. the distal ends of sections 120 and 140 are shown positioned well beyond the opening in vessel V for side branch T3. It should also be noted that in the event stent section 110 is to be characterized as comprising the stent, then the two balloons 210 and 230 fail to be "positioned within the stent adjacent to its distal end" as is specified in independent claim 8. In either case, the cited reference clearly fails to anticipate the method of the present invention as claimed.

Moreover, in view of the fact that the articulated stent structure shown in the cited reference cannot provide proper support for the region of a bifurcation that defines the opening of a side branch vessel, it is respectfully submitted that a **method** for achieving a flare that continuously extends about the main vessel and into the side branch opening as is shown in FIG. 76 cannot reasonably be considered obvious over the teachings of the cited reference.

In light of the above remarks, applicants earnestly believe the application to now be in condition for allowance and respectfully request that it be passed to issue. Please charge Deposit Account No. 06-2425 for any additional fees in connection with this amendment.

Respectfully submitted,
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